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Kelvin Medallist, 1955 : H. W. Bennetts, C.B.E., D.V.Sc.

The Kelvin Medal of the Royal Society of Western Australia Incorporated, was inaugurated in 1924, and is awarded at intervals of four years or more for distinguished work in science connected with Western Australia. The medal for 1955 has been awarded to Dr. H. W. Bennetts, Principal of the Animal Health and Nutrition Laboratory of the Department of Agriculture of Western Australia.

Harold William Bennetts was born in Melbourne on 18th July, 1898, and educated at Wesley College and the University of Melbourne, where he gained the degrees of B.V.Sc. (1919), M.V.Sc. (1920) and D.V.Sc. (1931). After serving in the Field Artillery in World War I, he became Microbiologist in the Commonwealth Department of Health and was in North Queensland during 1921 and 1922. In 1923 he was appointed Lecturer and Demonstrator in Pathology and Bacteriology in the Melbourne Veterinary School and in 1925 became Veterinary Pathologist in the Department of Agriculture in Perth. He has remained an officer of that department, apart from the period 1928-1935, when he was seconded to C.S.I.R. and has been Principal of the Animal Health and Nutrition Laboratory at Nedlands since its establishment in 1947. He has also been a Visiting Lecturer in the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Western Australia.

Dr. Bennetts was a member of the Council of this Society for most of the period 1929-

1944 and was President during 1934-1935. His Presidential Address was entitled "Plants Poisonous to Live Stock in Western Australia." This was a field in which he took a great deal of interest and worked in association with the Government Botanist (Mr. C. A. Gardner). The fruits of their joint work are soon to appear in a richly illustrated work "The Toxic Plants of Western Australia."

Dr. Bennetts first made his name in veterinary research by his solution of a sheep disease (entero-toxaemia), known in the early days as the Beverley sheep disease and latterly as the braxy-like disease, which had worried sheep-owners and baffled veterinary investigators for years. Subsequently he made notable contributions to the understanding and treatment of copper deficiency and the oestrogenic effects of subterranean clover, both major problems to the stock-owners of Western Australia. He also made many valuable contributions to other problems and the results of his researches between 1926 and 1955 are published in over 50 papers in various scientific journals.

Dr. Bennetts is a Fellow of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science and was President of Section L at the Adelaide Meeting in 1946. He is also a Fellow of the Australian Veterinary Association and an Honorary Member of the Royal Society of Medicine, London. In 1948 he was honoured by the award of a C.B.E.

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